

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-06

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DRAFTED BY EA/PHL:RTWILLNER:PAW

APPROVED BY EA/PHL:BAFLECK

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: EFIN, RP

SUBJECT: LINNIE JEAN HODGES ESTATE

REF: MANILA 6077

1. EA/PHL HAS RECEIVED PHONE CALL FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TREASURY WALKER, RELAYING STRONG CONCERN OF SECRETARY SIMON ABOUT CONTINUED DELAY IN DECISION ON HODGES ESTATE CASE. SECRETARY HAD SUGGESTED WALKER CALL VIRATA DIRECTLY TO SEEK RESOLUTION. WALKER PLANS TO CALL AMBASSADOR EVENING OF MAY 13 WASHINGTON TIME TO DISCUSS APPROACH, BUT FEELS THAT DIRECT DISCUSSION WITH VIRATA MAY BE NECESSARY TO INSURE LATTER'S FULL UNDERSTANDING OF ISSUE THAT CONFRONTS TREASURY.

2. WALKER STRESSES THAT RELEVANT FACTS IN CASE ARE ESSENTIALLY AS STATED IN APRIL 1 MEMORANDUM, POUCHED TO CHENEY APRIL 21. CASTILLO NOW IN WASHINGTON, HAS INFORMED TREASURY THAT BRIEF WAS SENT TO VIRATA ON CASE, BUT CASTILLO HAD NEITHER INFORMATION ON ITS CONTENTS NOR ANY
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FURTHER QUESTIONS.

3. WALKER SEES NO EVIDENCE OF ANY DELIBERATE EFFORT BY ESTATE TO DECEIVE GOP OR USG, NOTING THAT AMOUNT REMITTED WAS BASED ON EARLIER PHILIPPINE COURT ORDER. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE MAY BE LEGAL PROBLEM RE PROPRIETY OF REMITTANCE, HOWEVER, SINCE IT WAS FOR TAXES NOT DUE OR OWING AT THE TIME. HIS PRIMARY CONCERN, HOWEVER, IS TO ELICIT DECISION FROM PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT THAT WILL ENABLE TREASURY TO GET MATTER SETTLED.

4. DEPTOFF AGREED THAT DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR WOULD BE IN ORDER BEFORE ANY EFFORT TO REACH VIRATA DIRECTLY. SUGGESTED THAT FRANK EXPOSITION OF PRESSURES INVOLVED IN CASE MIGHT BE HELPFUL. STRESSED THAT DELAYS TO DATE PROBABLY REFLECT CONCERN THAT GOP DECISIONS COULD RUN AFOUL OF STILL COMPETING CLAIMANTS TO THE ESTATE IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND DESIRE THAT ANY ACTION TAKEN NOW BE SUFFICIENTLY STAFFED THAT NO FURTHER COMPLICATIONS ENSUE. SUGGESTED THAT GOP OFFICIALS MAY NOT UNDERSTAND REASONS FOR CURRENT HIGH-LEVEL CONCERN IN USG AND THAT FRANK EXPOSITION OF PRESSURES INVOLVED MIGHT BE HELPFUL.

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